

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The following Listing of Claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (currently amended): A shipping container comprising:

a tube ~~and an end cap, the tube~~ having

a cylindrical body ~~and,~~

an open end, ~~the cylindrical body having and~~

a mounting opening formed ~~therein~~ in the cylindrical body adjacent to the open end, ~~the;~~ and

an end cap comprising adapted to be releasably secured to the tube, the end cap having

a circular sidewall that is adapted to be received by within the open end of the tube such that ~~one of the circular sidewall and the cylindrical body~~ is radially surrounded by ~~the other of the circular sidewall and the cylindrical body of the tube,~~

an opening provided through the circular sidewall including that defines a deflectable tab portion of the circular sidewall, and

a projection formed on the deflectable tab portion of the circular sidewall that extends away from the circular sidewall and is adapted to extend into the mounting opening formed in the cylindrical body of the tube when the circular sidewall is received within the open end of the tube so as to releasably secure the end cap to the tube.

Claim 2 (canceled)

Claim 3 (currently amended): The shipping container according to claim 2_1 wherein a plurality of mounting openings are formed in the cylindrical body of the tube

adjacent to the open end, and wherein the circular sidewall of the end cap includes a corresponding plurality of projections formed on a corresponding plurality of deflectable tab portions.

Claim 4 (original): The shipping container according to claim 3 wherein the plurality of mounting openings are spaced an equal distance apart radially about the cylindrical body adjacent to the open end, and wherein the plurality of projections are spaced equal distance apart radially about the circular sidewall.

Claims 5-6 (canceled)

Claim 7 (currently amended): The shipping container according to claim-5_1 wherein the projection comprises a top edge portion that is arranged to contact against a top peripheral portion of the mounting opening and thereby prevent withdrawal of the end cap from the tube.

Claim 8 (original): The shipping container according to claim 7 wherein the projection further comprises a bottom ramp portion arranged opposite the top edge portion for promoting inward deflection of the deflectable tab when the end cap is pressed into the open end of the tube.

Claim 9 (original): The shipping container according to claim 8 wherein the projection further comprises a side ramp portion arranged between the top edge portion and the bottom ramp portion, the side ramp portion promoting inward deflection of the deflectable tab when the end cap is rotated relative to the tube when the projection is extending into the mounting opening.

Claim 10 (currently amended): The shipping container according to claim-2_1 wherein the end cap further comprises a peripheral rim portion that extends beyond the circular sidewall, the peripheral rim portion contacting a perimeter of the open end of the

tube to limit the extent to which the end cap can be received within the open end of the tube.

Claim 11 (currently amended): The shipping container according to claim-2 1 wherein the end cap further comprises an end wall that extends between the circular sidewall.

Claim 12 (original): The shipping container according to claim 11 wherein the end wall further comprises a handle portion for facilitating rotation of the end cap relative to the tube.

Claim 13 (currently amended): The shipping container according to claim-2 1 wherein the tube is formed of spirally wound strips of paper.

Claim 14 (currently amended): The shipping container according to claim-2 1 wherein the end cap is formed of plastic.

Claim 15 (currently amended): The shipping container according to claim-2 1 wherein the cylindrical body has an inner diameter of from about two inches to about seven inches.

Claim 16 (currently amended): The shipping container according to claim-2 1 wherein the cylindrical body has a wall thickness of from about 0.050 inches to about 0.250 inches.

Claims 17-33 (canceled)

Claim 34 (currently amended): A method of ~~releasably securing an end cap to a tube, the method comprising for closing a shipping container that comprises:~~
~~providing a tube comprising having~~
~~a cylindrical body, having at least one~~

an open end, and
a plurality of mounting openings formed ~~therein~~ in the cylindrical body
adjacent to the open end; and
~~providing an end cap comprising adapted to be releasably secured to the tube,~~
the end cap having
a circular sidewall ~~having that is adapted to be received within the open~~
end of the tube such that the circular sidewall is radially surrounded
by the cylindrical body of the tube,
a plurality of openings provided through the circular sidewall that define a
plurality of deflectable tab portions of the circular sidewall; and
a plurality of projections formed on the deflectable tab portions of the
circular sidewall ~~that extend away from the circular sidewall, each~~
~~projection being formed on a deflectable tab portion of the circular~~
~~sidewall are adapted to extend into the plurality of mounting~~
openings formed in the cylindrical body of the tube when the
circular sidewall is received within the open end of the tube; and
the method comprising:
pressing the end cap into the open end of the tube ~~until~~ such that the cylindrical
body surrounds the circular sidewall and contact between the plurality of
projections and the cylindrical body causes inward deflection of the
deflectable tab portions of the circular sidewall; and
orienting the end cap within the open end of the tube such that the plurality of
projections extend into the plurality of mounting openings ~~to~~ and thereby
releasably secure the end cap to the tube.

Claim 35 (original): The method according to claim 34 wherein each projection further comprises a bottom ramp portion that is configured to promote inward deflection of the deflectable tab when the end cap is pressed into the open end of the tube.

Claim 36 (original): The method according to claim 35 wherein each projection further comprises a top portion that is configured to contact against a top peripheral

portion of the mounting opening and thereby prevent withdrawal of the end cap from the tube.

Claim 37 (original): The method according to claim 36 wherein each projection further comprises a side ramp portion arranged between the top edge portion and the bottom ramp portion, the side ramp portion promoting inward deflection of the deflectable tab when the end cap is rotated relative to the tube when the projection is extending into the mounting opening.

Claim 38 (canceled)

Claim 39 (new): A method for opening a shipping container that comprises:
a tube having

a cylindrical body,

an open end, and

a plurality of mounting openings formed in the cylindrical body adjacent to the open end; and

an end cap having

a circular sidewall received within the open end of the tube such that the circular sidewall is radially surrounded by the cylindrical body of the tube,

a plurality of openings provided through the circular sidewall that define a plurality of deflectable tab portions of the circular sidewall; and

a plurality of projections formed on the deflectable tab portions of the circular sidewall that extend into the plurality of mounting openings formed in the cylindrical body of the tube;

the method comprising:

rotating the end cap relative to the tube until the plurality of projections are not received within the mounting openings; and

pulling the end cap out of the open end of the tube.

Claim 40 (new): The method according to claim 39 wherein each projection further comprises a bottom ramp portion that is configured to promote inward deflection of the deflectable tab when the end cap is pressed into the open end of the tube.

Claim 41 (new): The method according to claim 40 wherein each projection further comprises a top portion that is configured to contact against a top peripheral portion of the mounting opening and thereby prevent withdrawal of the end cap from the tube.

Claim 42 (new): The method according to claim 41 wherein each projection further comprises a side ramp portion arranged between the top edge portion and the bottom ramp portion, the side ramp portion promoting inward deflection of the deflectable tab when the end cap is rotated relative to the tube when the projection is extending into the mounting opening.